

NEWS RELEASE



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CONVICTED FELON SENTENCED FOR ILLEGALLY POSSESSING FIREARM

Repeat offender must now serve federal prison time

Lafayette, Louisiana . . . United States Attorney Donald W. Washington and ATF Special Agent in Charge David G. Harper announced that **TROY JOSEPH SMITH**, age 29, from Lafayette, Louisiana was sentenced today in federal court by United States District Judge Tucker Melançon to 57 months imprisonment to be followed by 3 years supervised release for being a felon in possession of a firearm. SMITH pled guilty to the federal crime in May 2006.

SMITH was indicted in February 2006 following investigations by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives and deputies with the Lafayette Parish Sheriff's Office into two separate incident wherein SMITH possessed firearms. It is unlawful for a convicted felon to possess a firearm and/or ammunition. SMITH was convicted in the 15th Judicial District in 1999 for theft of over \$5,000 and in 2000 he was convicted again in the 15th Judicial District for possession of cocaine.

In June 2004, deputies of the Lafayette Parish Sheriff's Office were called to the SMITH's home to investigate an attempted burglary. There they found SMITH in possession of a Glock .45 pistol. In July 2004, deputies were again called to the Smith residence because of a domestic altercation. SMITH was found to be in possession of a Glock .40 pistol.

U.S. Attorney Washington stated, "I applaud local, state and federal law enforcement in their continuing strides to keep our communities safe from criminals possessing firearms. My office will also continue to seek the arrest, prosecution and incarceration of felons who unlawfully possess weapons ostensibly to commit new crimes."

This case is being prosecuted by the United States Attorney's Office as part of Project Safe Neighborhoods. Project Safe Neighborhoods is a nationwide program begun in 2001, and designed to reduce violence in our communities by aggressively using existing federal firearms laws. United States Attorneys, District Attorneys, Sheriffs, Police Chiefs, and state officials have created partnerships to address crimes involving firearms. Generally, any arrest involving a firearm is reviewed immediately by local, state and federal authorities to decide whether the case is best suited for prosecution under state or federal law, or a combination of both. Project Safe Neighborhoods is expected to lead to longer prison terms for violent criminals, and a significant reduction in violent crime. To date, federal prosecutions under Project Safe Neighborhoods in the Western District of Louisiana have led to the incarceration of criminals responsible for violent crimes such as homicides, aggravated assaults, robbery, car jacking, burglary, and drug trafficking.

Sentencing in federal court is determined by the discretion of federal judges and the governing statute. Parole has been abolished in the federal system.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Brett L. Grayson.

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